



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 29, 2003

The Honorable John W. Warner
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510-4601

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your letter about the proposed roadmap to Middle East peace, and your suggestion concerning a NATO peacekeeping force. I understand your view that such an offer could be a further inducement to the parties to reach agreement.

As you know, the issues dividing Israelis and Palestinians are deep, complex, and hotly contested. The security arrangements of any settlement are one important element among many. Ultimately, our goal is for two states living side by side in peace. Over the long term, such an arrangement must be sustainable without the presence of outside peacekeeping forces. As we engage the parties in our effort to forge a peace agreement, I will keep your proposal under consideration.

I also agree with your comments about the importance of NATO's role as we face the security challenges of the 21st Century. As you know, at the NATO Prague Summit, Allied leaders joined me in launching an ambitious agenda for modernizing NATO, including the creation of a NATO Response Force, reforming the command structure, and bringing in new members who are committed to democracy and collective defense. I appreciate your strong support for this important effort.

We have begun steps to increase NATO's role in Afghanistan, and have asked NATO to consider assistance it could provide in post-war Iraq. I welcome your support on these matters as well.

Sincerely,



George W. Bush